



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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MAYOR

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PLANNING DIVISION
HISTORIC PRESERVATION

**STEP 1: DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE
STAFF REPORT**

Site: 1 Washington Street

Case: HPC.DMO 2021.06

Applicant: Niranjan Gawli

Owner: same as applicant

Proposal: *Demolish principal structure*

HPC Meeting Date: March 16, 2021

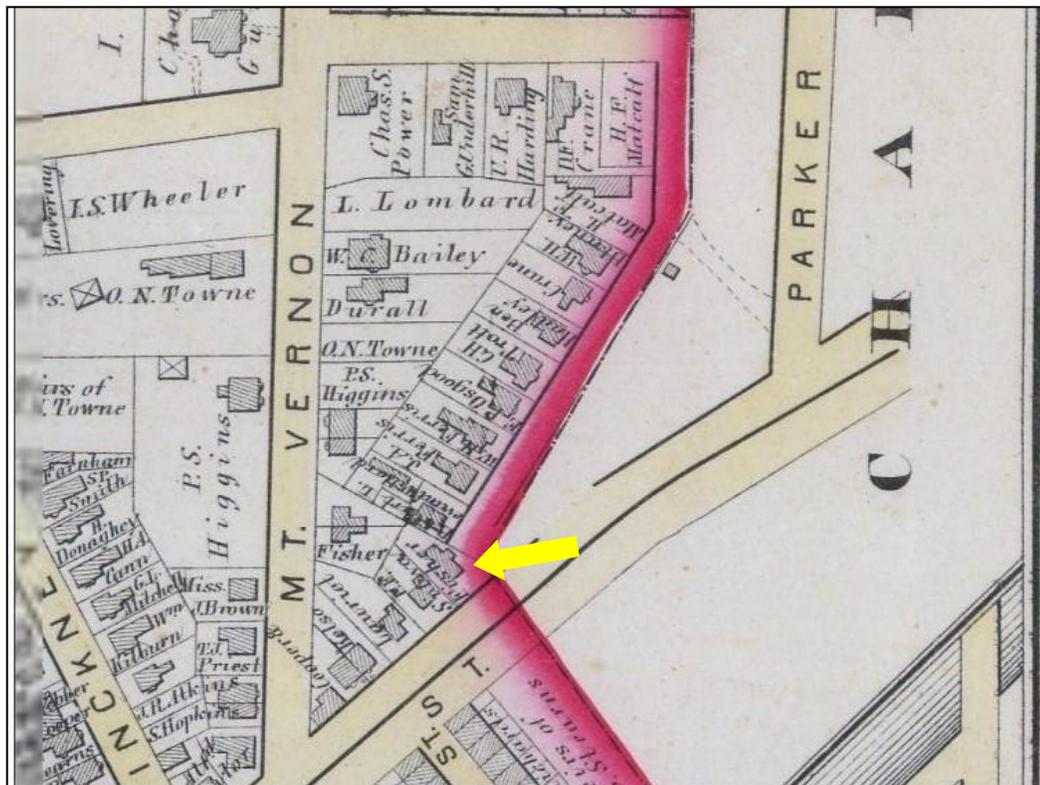




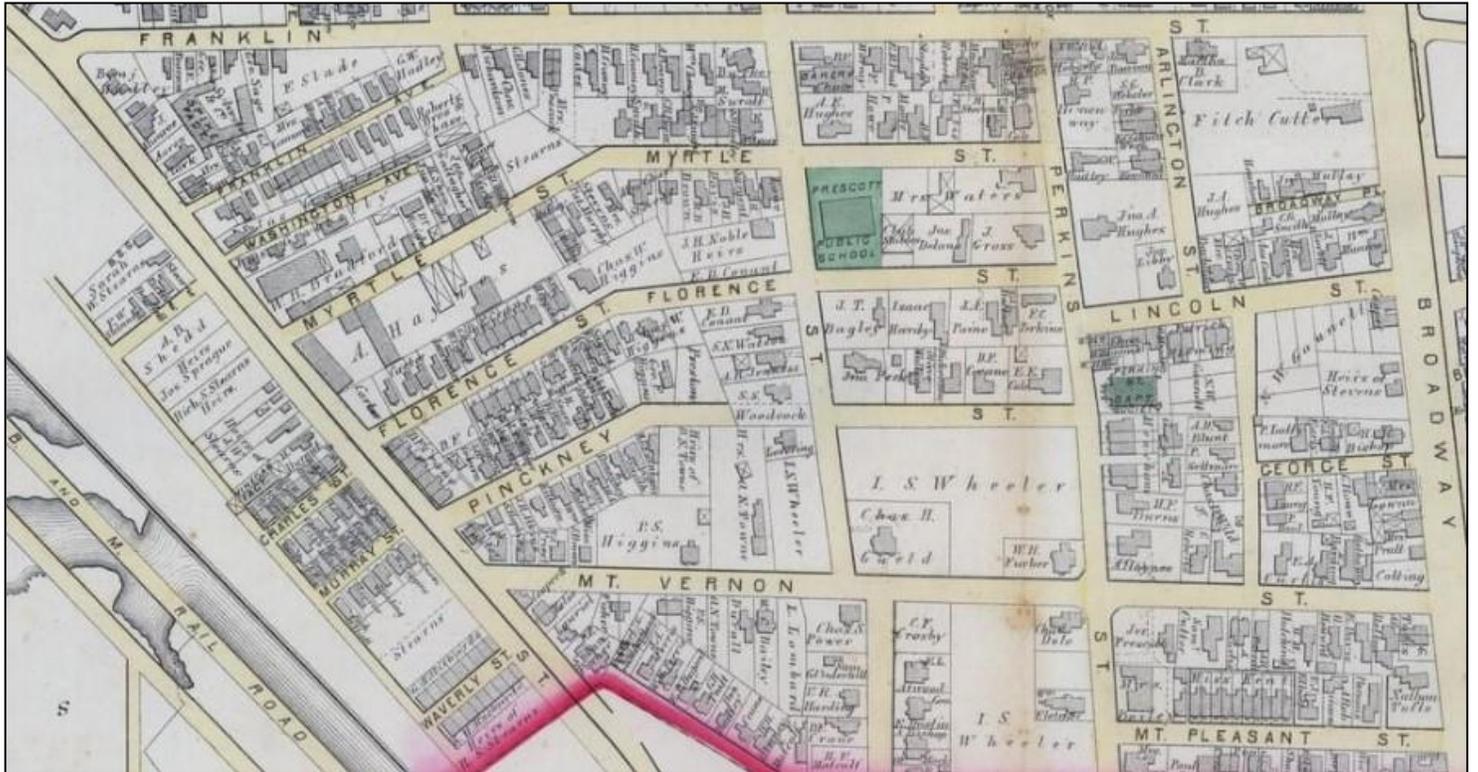
I. HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Historical Context: 1 Washington Street appears on the 1874 Hopkins map, plates B & C. As today, this property is on the municipal line with the Charlestown section of Boston. With the exception of the current enclosed front porch, the building in 1874 presents the massing that is still seen today: main massing with a right elevation square bay and a rear addition that is subservient to the main massing.

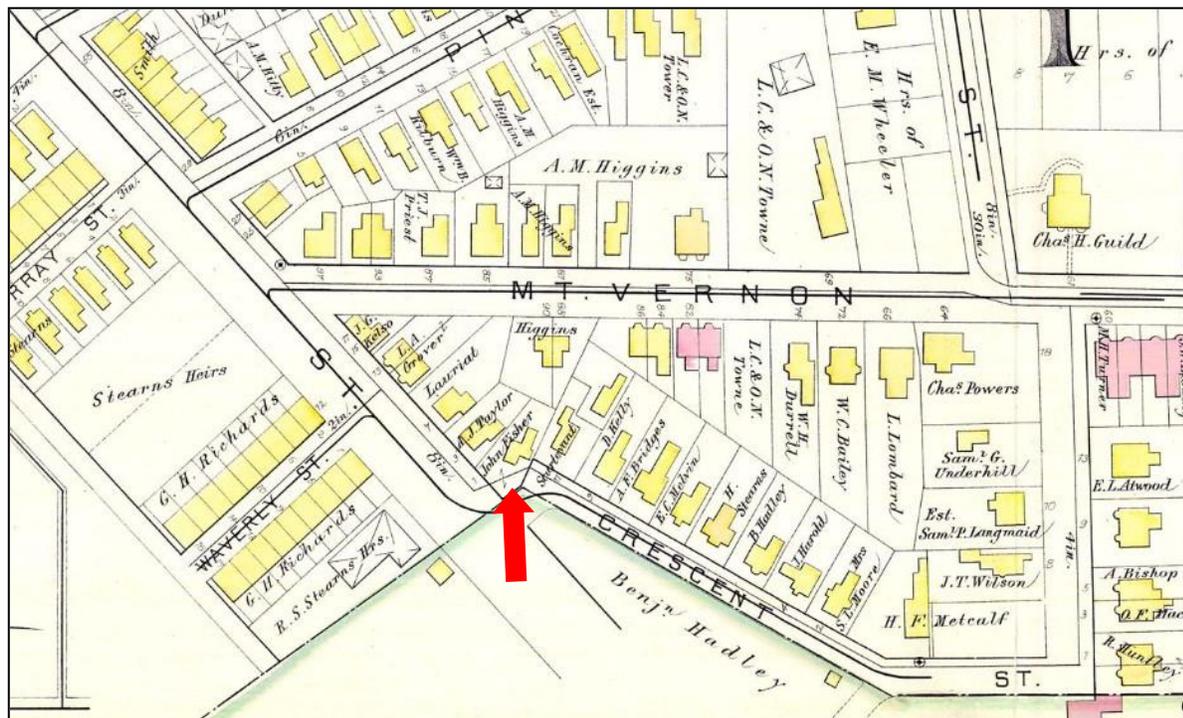
Below: 1874 Hopkins Plates B/C in close-up.



A larger view of the 1874 Hopkins plate B/C shows a significant amount of residential density in this portion of the City. Multiple, large parcels of land remained held by members of the Tufts family, particularly Charles Tufts and the Heirs of Nathan Tufts. A spike factory was located at the corner of Washington and Franklin Streets. The Prescott School served area children. In 1874, 1 Washington Street was owned by “Fisher”.



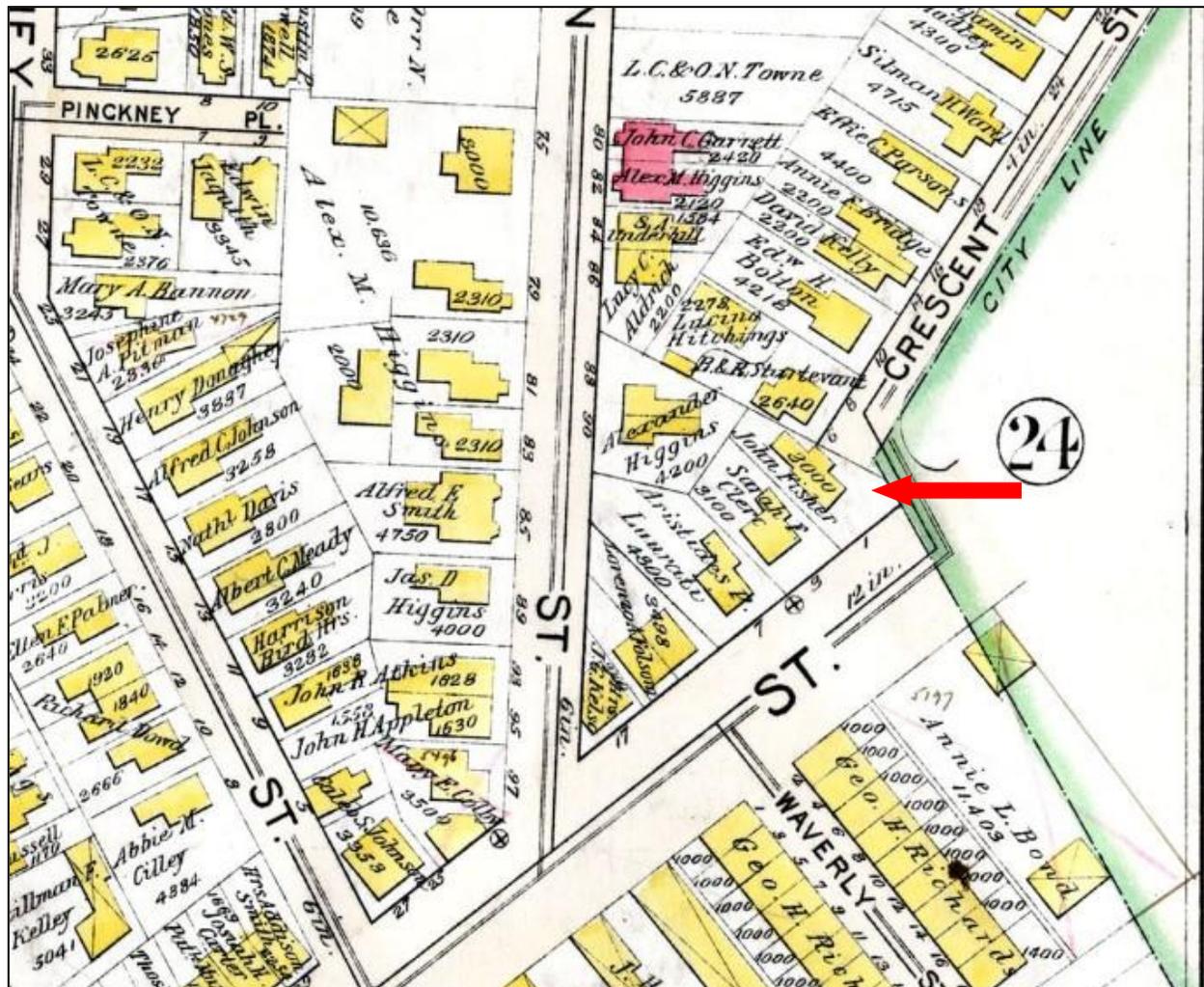
The 1884 Hopkins Plate 001 clarifies the owner of the property as one “John Fisher”.



According to the 1880 census, John Fisher and his wife, Mary, were immigrants from Germany. At this time, John, 44, is listed as a cooper (barrel maker) and Mary, 38, is listed as “keeping house” indicating that she is a housewife not employed outside the home. Their 19-year old son, Frederic, is listed as “at home” while their 17-year old son, George, is in the “liquor business”. Both children are listed as born in Massachusetts.

53	74	Fisher John	44	Cooper	Germany
		Mary	38	Keeping house	Germany
		Frederic	19	At home	Massachusetts
		George	17	Liquor business	Massachusetts

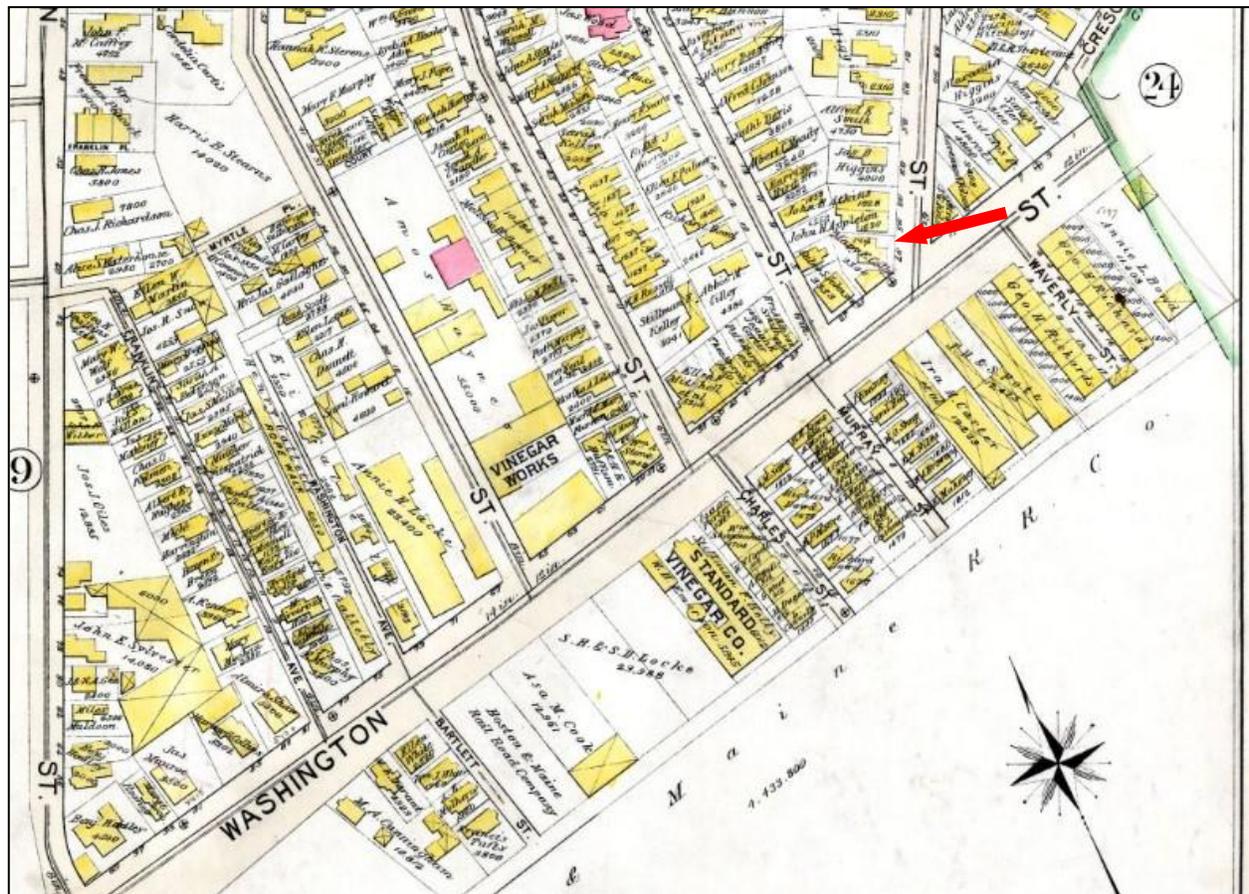
A close-up of the 1895 Bromley Plate 025 (below) shows the house in its original formation still under the ownership of the Fisher family.



A larger view of the 1896 Bromley Plate 025 (below) shows the Standard Vinegar Company and Vinegar Works in the immediate area. Somerville was a center for the manufacture of agricultural products in the 19th century, particularly vinegar and pickles. Significant agricultural production in the area and New England, excellent access to the railway network and the proximity to Boston all helped Somerville become an important player in the food processing industry.

A vinegar plant had been active on Washington Street since Amos Haynes brought his vinegar factory to the street in the 1850s. The vinegar factory he erected on Washington Street in Somerville became the largest vinegar factor in New England. Within 10 years of Haynes opening his factory on Washington Street, Michael Durant opened his own vinegar factory across the street. Upon his death, Durant’s factory was purchased by Arthur Rowse, the owner of Standard Vinegar Company¹, which is seen in the map below.

Arthur Rowse’s Standard Vinegar Company became today’s Veryfine² brand of juice drinks. The Veryfine brand was added to his product line in 1919 when he marketed pasturized apple juice. In 1930, Rowse moved his vinegar factory from Somerville to Littleton, MA in order to be closer to the apple orchards on which his vinegar production depended.



¹ *Beyond the Neck*, p. 72

² By Source (WP:NFC#4), Fair use, <https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?curid=50930520>

II. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Please see the section immediately below which discusses location, design, materials and any alterations as the same information would be written here, just in longer form.

The National Park Service identifies historic integrity as the ability of a property to convey significance. A property should possess sufficient integrity to convey, represent or contain the values and qualities for which it is judged significant; therefore, the following is an identification and evaluation of these qualities and alterations as they affect the ability of the subject property to convey significance.

The period of relevance for the house begins pre-1874

- a. Location: The structure is in its original location.
- b. Design: Italianate. 2 ½-story with right elevation single-story squared, flat-roofed bay, two-story, subservient, flat-roofed rear addition. Modern enclosed front porch running the length of the front façade. Gable-fronted (no gable returns), rectangular main massing.

Front façade

- First story: two window bays and side entry hall configuration
- Second story: three bays wide, but right window bay has been covered.

Right jog

- Flat roof with most windows covered by vinyl siding.

Left elevation main massing

- Two bays deep with bays set far apart on both stories. One-over-one double-hung replacement windows throughout both stories.

Right elevation main massing

- Several original window openings covered and size of existing window openings altered. One-over-one replacement windows and small slider window present.

Rear addition

- Two window bays deep with bays set far apart. One-over-one double-hung replacement windows.
- Two brick chimney stacks, one rising through main massing, the other through the rear addition.
- Brick foundation exposed on left elevation. Foundation has been cemented over on multiple elevations; some basement windows present.
- 20th-century enclosed front porch runs the length of the front façade. Double-hung, one-over-one single-paned modern windows throughout. Stationary fan lights above

double-hung windows. Modern porch entry door. Modern wood steps; mid-late 20th-century metal step railings. Latticework skirting around enclosed front porch.

- c. *Materials:* Vinyl siding; vinyl or aluminum windows; wood steps with metal rails; brick foundation with concrete supports; asphalt shingles; brick chimney stacks; wood or composite front entry door; wood latticework skirting; metal gutter and downspout system.
- d. *Alterations:* Vinyl siding; replacement windows; front steps and rails; enclosed front porch; several original window openings closed; cement supports around portions of brick foundation.

Evaluation of Integrity: 1 Washington Street maintains its integrity of location, form, and massing.

III. FINDINGS

For a Determination of Significance, the subject building must be found either (i) importantly associated with people, events or history and/or (ii) historically or architecturally significant. The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) must make these findings. The portions of the Demolition Review Ordinance (DRO) related to these findings are included below:

A. HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

- a. *Importantly associated with one or more historic persons or events, or with the broad architectural, cultural, political, economic or social history of the City or the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.*
 - 1. The HPC must make a finding as to whether or not the structure at 1 Washington Street meets any of the criteria stated above (a).
 - 2. The HPC must specifically state why the structure at 1 Washington Street does or does not meet the threshold for historic significance under finding “a”.

B. HISTORICAL & ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

- b. *The findings for historical and/or architectural significance of a historic property address the period, style, method of building construction and association with a reputed architect or builder of the subject property, either by itself or in the context of a group of buildings or structures, and therefore it is in the public interest to be preserved or rehabilitated rather than to be demolished.*

1. The HPC must make a finding as to whether or not the structure at 1 Washington Street meets any of the criteria stated above.
2. The HPC must specifically state why the structure at 1 Washington Street does or does not meet the threshold for historic significance under finding “b”.

IV. VOTE

When bringing the matter to a vote, the HPC must include the reasons why the structure at 1 Washington Street is or is not “historically significant”.